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of cotton for manufacture and export of competitive downstream textile products.

- (6) National Institute for Fashion Technology (NIFT), its six branches and Apparel Training & Design Centres (ATDCs) are running various courses/programmes to meet skilled manpower requirements of textile industry especially apparel in the field of design, merchandising and marketing.
- (7) The import of a large number of garment machinery has been allowed under concessional custom duty of 5%.
- (8) Allowing foreign equity participation upto 100%, through automatic route, in the textile sector with certain exceptions.
- (9) To prepare and sensitise our textile and garment industry to conform to the ecological requirements of importing countries by providing facilities by way of eco-testing laboratories.

Religious and Tourist places lacking in infrastructure facilities

1193. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) the names of important tourist and religious places which are lacking in infrastructure facilities;
- (b) the amount spent for the development of such tourists and religious places for the past five years; State-wise;
- (c) whether Government is monitoring proper utilisation of funds and proper maintenance of tourist and religious places in different States; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Infrastructure facilities at a large number of tourist/religious places need to be augmented/upgraded. Department of Tourism, Government of India, therefore, provides some financial assistance to States/UTs for tourism projects prioritised in consultation with them every year.

(b) An Amount of Rs. 34557.42 lakhs has been sanctioned and Rs. 13613.81 lakhs released for tourism projects in the country during the last five years.

(c) and (d) Though implementation and maintenance of tourism projects are undertaken by the State Governments/U.T. Administrations, Department of Tourism, Government of India, takes various steps for monitoring of proper utilization of funds and maintenance of tourist and religious places in different States. For instance funds are released in instalments, release of subsequent instalment is made only after receipt of utilization certificates, monitoring is done of project implementation at various levels etc. State Governments/U.T. Administrations are also required to sign a Management Agreement for proper upkeep and maintenance of assets created with central financial assistance.

Increasing tourist potential in South Asian countries

1194. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether South Asian countries have a vast tourism potential but still the region receives only one per cent of the global share in tourists; and

(b) if so, what steps are being taken to increase the tourism potential in this region?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) According to the report on tourism market trends released by the World Tourism Organisation, the share of tourist arrivals in South Asian countries as compared to the world tourist arrivals has increased from 0.7 per cent in the year 1995 to 0.9 per cent in the year 2000.

(b) The same report indicates that the Governments of South Asian nations have resorted to more aggressive and multifarious marketing and promotional campaign including participation in international tourism trade fairs, organisation of familiarization tours